Executive Proclamation
State of South Dakota
Office of the Governor

Whereas, Young people will be the stewards of our communities, nation, and world in critical times, and the present and future well-being of our society requires an involved, caring citizenry with good character; and,

Whereas, Concerns about the character training of children have taken on a new sense of urgency as violence by and against youth threatens the physical and psychological well-being of the nation; and,

Whereas, More than ever, children need strong and constructive guidance from their families and their communities, including schools, youth organizations, religious institutions, and civic groups; and,

Whereas, The character of a nation is only as strong as the character of its individual citizens, and public good benefits when young people learn by word and example that good character counts in personal relationships, in school, and in the workplace; and,

Whereas, Scholars and educators agree that people do not automatically develop good character and, therefore, conscientious efforts must be made by youth-influencing institutions and individuals to help young people develop the essential traits and characteristics that comprise good character; and,

Whereas, Character development is, first and foremost, an obligation of families, though efforts by faith communities, schools, youth, civic, and human service organizations, also play a very important role in supporting family efforts by fostering and promoting good character; and,

Whereas, The Aspen Declaration, written in 1992 by an eminent group of educators, youth leaders, and ethics scholars, states that, "effective character education is based on core ethical values which form the foundation of democratic society"— *trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship* — and these "Six Pillars of Character" transcend cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences:

Now, Therefore, I, M. Michael Rounds, Governor of the state of South Dakota, do hereby proclaim October 21-27, 2007, as

CHARACTER COUNTS! WEEK

in South Dakota.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the state of South Dakota, in Pierre, the Capital City, this Twentieth Day of September in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Seven.

M. Michael Rounds, Governor

Attest:

Chris Nelson, Secretary of State